

April 29, 2025

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Rodrigues and Michlewitz:

Pursuant to Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2025, we are transmitting to you this report on the plan for phasing out the use of hotels and motels in the Emergency Housing Assistance Program.

Sincerely,

Secretary Matthew J. Gorzkowicz,
Executive Office for Administration
and Finance

Secretary Edward Augustus,
Executive Office for Housing and
Livable Communities

MEMORANDUM

TO: House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means
FR: Executive Office for Administration and Finance, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
DT: April 29, 2025
RE: EA report on plan for phasing out use of hotels and motels

Overview

By law passed by the General Court in 1983, the Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter program has provided temporary emergency shelter to eligible homeless families and pregnant women. This one-of-a-kind program has contributed to Massachusetts having one of the lowest rates of unsheltered family homelessness in the country. Through its history, the size of the EA system has expanded and contracted to meet the changing demand for shelter services, driven by a variety of external factors affecting the economy, housing market, and immigration system. Historically, during periods of acute demand, hotels and motels have been used to add surge shelter capacity. Before the recent emergency, the use of hotels in the EA shelter system peaked in 2014, when the system expanded to a caseload of 4,600 families, over 1,500 of whom were sheltered in hotels across the state.

Beginning in 2022, the Commonwealth saw an unprecedented demand for shelter due to the housing crisis, failed federal immigration policy and a lack of safeguards to control the expansion of the shelter system. In response, the Baker Administration began expanding the shelter system across multiple sites, including hotels and motels. By July 2023, as many as 40 families per day, or 1,000 new families per month, were seeking EA shelter. In August 2023, Governor Healey declared a state of emergency, activated the National Guard to support supplemental shelters, and in November 2023, instituted major policy reforms to end shelter expansion and curb costs. This included, for the first time in the history of the EA program, setting a maximum capacity for the EA system (7,500 families) and creating a waitlist and prioritization process for eligible families seeking shelter placement.

In the months that followed, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) reduced the number of hotels and motels used for shelter through a process of site consolidation. Alongside this process, EOHLC brought contracted shelter service providers on site to all hotel shelters with case management and housing search services for EA families. Less than a year after Governor Healey instituted the cap, EOHLC managed to reduce the number of hotels and motels used for EA shelter from 100 to 66.

Governor Healey then announced her intent to phase out the use of hotel shelters by the end of 2025. By November 2024, the EA shelter system had been further reduced to 57 hotels, which sheltered nearly half (46%) of the families it served. As of April 30, 2025, the EA shelter system will have 32 remaining hotels, which shelter approximately 25% of the families served by the system. To close all hotels by the end of 2025, EA providers, in partnership with EOHLC, will work to:

1. Support as many families as possible to exit from hotels into safe and stable housing before each scheduled closure date;
2. Transfer any families unable to exit shelter prior to closure to appropriate shelter placements within the EA system; and
3. Provide families and communities ample notice and resources ahead of planned closures.

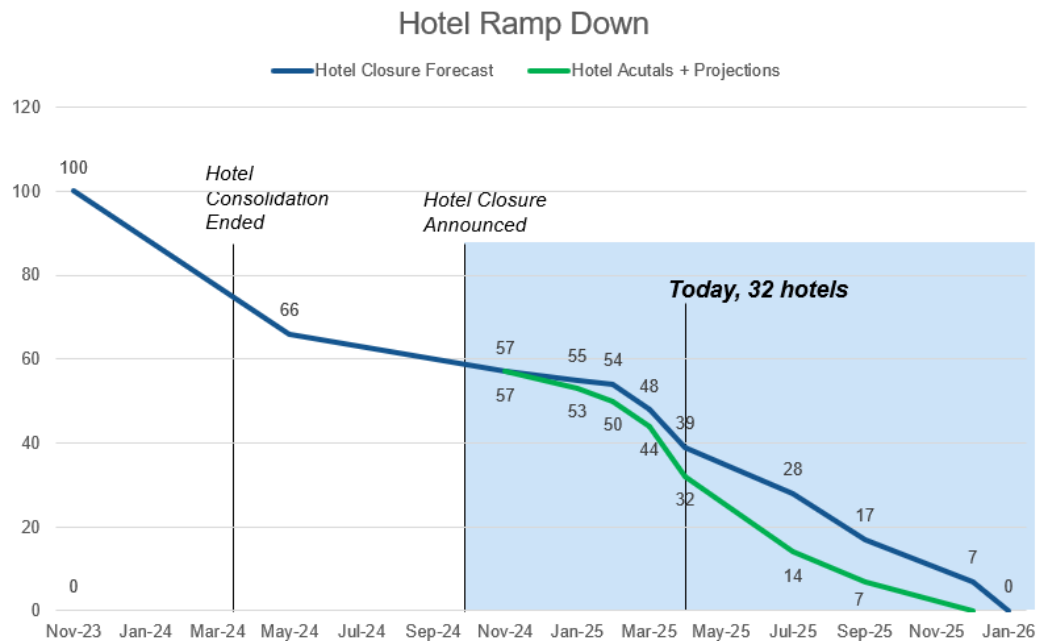
EOHLC will close hotels across five phases. EOHLC will make efforts to move more quickly in closing hotels to achieve cost savings, while mitigating disruption to families and communities.

The successful reduction in the number of hotel shelters has coincided with reductions in caseload and costs across the shelter system due to reforms enacted by Governor Healey. In April 2025, the number of families in shelter dropped below 5,000 for the first time since July 2023. Since the start of 2025, double the number of families have exited shelter (approximately 2,500) than have entered shelter (approximately 1,100). Approximately 85 percent of families seeking shelter are longtime Massachusetts families.

Hotel Closure Plan

This chart below compares the originally forecasted hotel closure plan with actual hotel ramp-down progress. As of April 30, 2025, we are ahead of schedule, with **32** hotels utilized for EA shelter. The green line shows real-time progress based on provider coordination, early closure acceleration, and success with supporting families to exit from shelter.

Figure 0 Hotel Closure – Forecast vs Actuals as of April 30, 2025



Hotel Closure Phases

Closures are currently being implemented across five structured phases:

- **Phase 1:** 7 closed by February 28, 2024
- **Phase 2:** 18 closed by April 30, 2025
- **Phase 3:** 18 hotels to close by June 30, 2025
- **Phase 4:** 7 hotels to close by August 31, 2025
- **Phase 5:** 7 hotels to close by December 31, 2025

The following guardrails are in place to ensure a smoother hotel closure process, which have been communicated to both staff and providers:

- EOHLC will not place new families in hotel sites ahead of a planned hotel site closure, with option for placement team to make limited exceptions to meet specific family needs.
- EOHLC and EA providers prioritize finding stable housing options for families instead of transferring them to alternative shelter sites.

Progress to Date

As of April 30, 2025

Phase	Closure Date	# of Hotels Currently Scheduled for Closure
Phase 1	02/28/2024	7 closed
Phase 2	04/30/2025	18 closed
Phase 3	06/30/2025	18
Phase 4	08/31/2025	7
Phase 5	12/31/2025	7

Hotel Closure Prioritization Framework

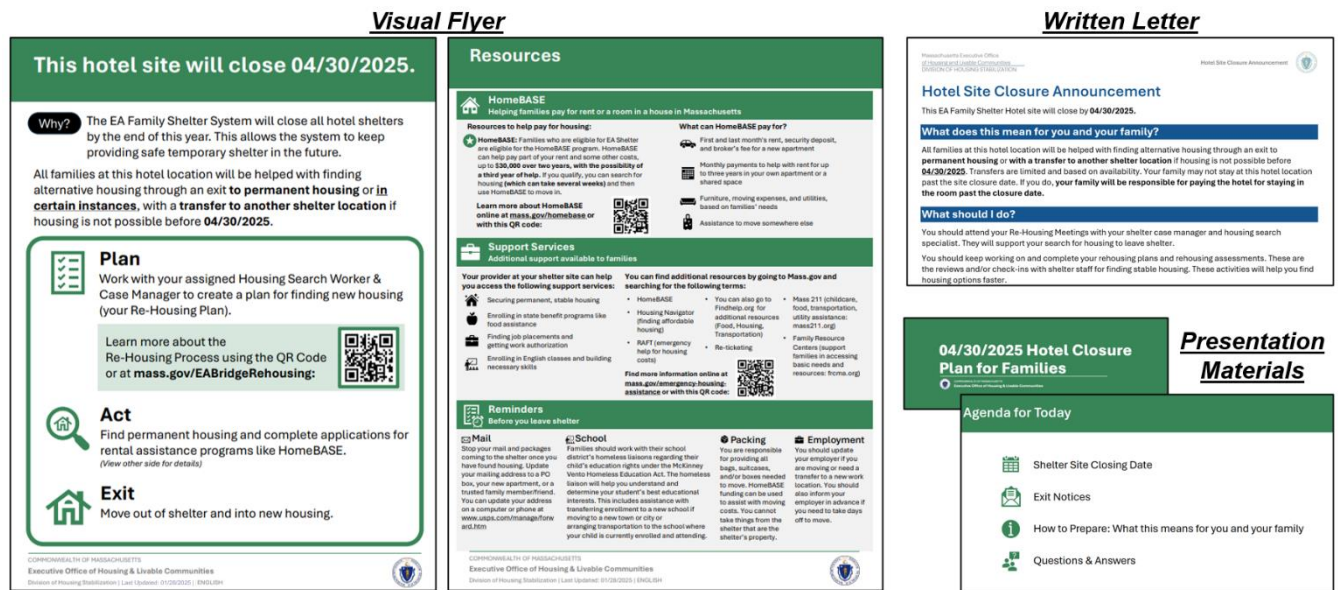
- Prioritize closure of hotels lacking family-oriented spaces or transportation access
- Prioritize closure of higher-cost hotels with higher relative room rates
- Align closures with provider or vendor contract end dates when feasible
- Accelerate closure of any hotels with higher vacancy rates
- Provide families with a clear exit date through written materials, presentations, and case management
- Support families with robust rehousing and case management prior to site closure
- Collaborate with providers and consider community impacts when setting closure dates

Communication Protocols and Family Support

Communication protocols are structured to ensure all stakeholders are informed and prepared ahead of a planned hotel shelter closure. This includes families, municipal and legislative partners, EA providers, community-based organizations, local schools, local boards of health, and other external partners.

EOHLC shares written materials with families to support their transition out of the hotel (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Family materials shared include flyer, written letter, & exit plan presentation



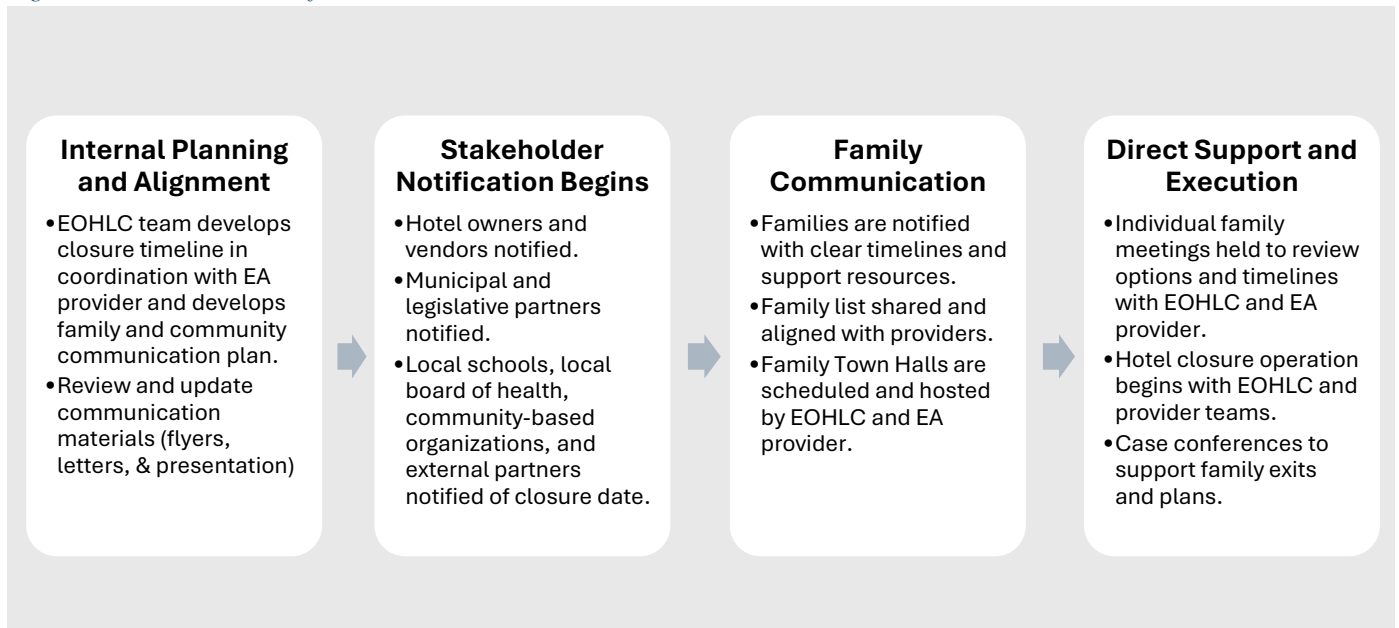
When updates to closure timelines occur, EOHLIC follows a consistent communication flow (see Figure 2) to maintain alignment and transparency. We also ensure that:

- In-person family town hall meetings are scheduled with EOHLIC staff and provider case managers to discuss any updates and next steps.
- Families receive tailored communication materials, including a flyer, formal letter, and presentation (see Figure 1).
- Individual family meetings are conducted to support planning and transition.

Hotel Closure Notification – Streamlined Communications

Figure 2 illustrates the simplified, four-step communication approach used to guide all hotel closure efforts. It ensures internal alignment, timely stakeholder notification, and clear, coordinated support for families throughout the transition process.

Figure 2. Hotel Closure Notification – Streamlined Communications



Estimated Savings Due to Hotel Closures

Closing hotel shelters by the end of December 2025 is a key component of returning the EA system to fiscal sustainability. Hotels and motels are the most expensive type of shelter in the EA system. The cost for hotels includes hotel rooms, food, transportation, and associated shelter services including direct care, case management, and housing search. The cost for hotels does not include post-shelter exit stabilization services and exit-related costs. Based on FY25 costs, EOHLC projects ~\$410 million in annualized savings to the Commonwealth when hotels are no longer a part of the EA system portfolio, or a projected cost savings of ~\$34 million/month.